



# NEWS RELEASE

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California Department of Social Services

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## **IHSS Budget Reductions to Become Effective Nov. 1, 2009**

Sacramento – California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Director John Wagner announced Friday that a number of changes to the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program adopted in the budget for 2009-10 will take effect on Nov. 1, 2009.

“Our top priority is implementing the changes to the IHSS program as responsibly as possible in accordance with state and federal law, and in a way that gives recipients, providers and county officials as much advance notice as possible,” Wagner said.

The IHSS program provides in-home assistance to low-income adults who are over 65 years of age, blind or disabled, and to children who are blind or disabled. Approximately 462,000 Californians receive IHSS services from an estimated 376,000 providers.

The 2009 Enacted Budget made significant changes to IHSS including service reductions to individuals with the lowest assessed needs, as well as anti-fraud provisions that require background checks and new enrollment procedures for providers.

### Service Reductions

The service reductions will affect approximately 130,000 recipients. An estimated 97,000 individuals with the lowest-assessed needs would lose certain kinds of IHSS services including housekeeping, meal preparation and clean-up, food shopping and errands. This reduction applies to individuals who have a functional index rank of 1, 2 or 3. An estimated 36,000 recipients with the lowest-assessed needs would lose all IHSS services under the reductions contained in the enacted Budget. This reduction applies to individuals with a functional index ranking of 1.99 and below. Recipients who have these functional index rankings and are affected by the reductions will be notified by mail in early October.

### Criminal Background Checks

The 2009 Enacted Budget also calls for criminal background checks for current IHSS providers as well as individuals applying to become IHSS providers. The provider background checks will apply to individuals applying to become providers on Nov. 1, 2009. Current providers will have until July 1, 2010 to undergo a background check.

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Based on federal Medicaid requirements, CDSS, prior to passage of the enacted budget, had already begun to implement a new provider enrollment form which would prohibit any person convicted of a felony crime or certain serious misdemeanors from serving as an IHSS provider due to Welfare & Institutions Code 14123(a), which states that the Director of Health Care Services "shall suspend a provider of service for conviction of any felony or any misdemeanor involving fraud, abuse of the Medi-Cal program or any patient, or otherwise substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a provider of service." Existing law will similarly require the state to suspend any current IHSS provider convicted of the crimes included in Welfare & Institutions Code 14123(a).

The changes were outlined in instructions contained in letters, known as "All-County Letters" that were shared with county representatives and stakeholder groups. The Department will continue to receive feedback before finalizing these instructions to counties on October 1, 2009. The state will then notify affected recipients directly by mail.